

BALINGUP PROGRESS ASSOCIATION AGM MINUTES 07/10/20

Meeting opened: 7.06pm

Present: Brian Vanallen, Deb Vanallen, Roz Benson, Wendy Trow, Peta Knapton, Helen Christensen, Joe Taylor, Wayne Irvine, Noelene King, Peter Gubler, Mark Giles, John Bailey, Anish Shah, Bronia Slava, Jackie Massey, Lucy Bourne, Sharon Smith, Steve Milton, Janine Milton, Judy Hawter, Helen van der Waal.

Visitors: Paul Camons, Brian Piesse

Apologies: Per Christensen, Bahavni Hindocha, Mike King, Ben Rose

Confirmation of minutes of 2019 AGM:

Resolution - that the minutes of the AGM of the Balingup Progression Association held on October 2, 2019 at the Balingup Community Centre be taken and read as confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Moved (Deb Vanallen) Seconded (Helen Christensen) **Carried**

Business arising from previous minutes:

President's Report:

This year has been a mixed bag as far as the BPA and its Sub-committees go. Covid and resulting restrictions had a huge effect on all events and groups that come under the BPA umbrella. No one or no organisation escaped the requirements placed upon them by our governments to protect our citizens.

The BPA continued to function albeit in a limited capacity. Liaising with council and other Government bodies EG Main Roads WA, Department of Water. We continue to lobby the Shire Council and continue to remind them Balingup is still part of the Shire. Dedicated Committee members continued to do a great job and are committed to the betterment of Balingup and its community.

As I have mentioned all committee members are committed to the BPA but I would like to make special mention of our Secretary Jodie Hornum who does an amazing job, her record keeping is first class and she has no trouble keeping me and the rest of the committee in line. Thank you Jodie and the rest of the 2019 committee it has been a pleasure working with you.

Reports from sub committees. The sub-committee reports are at Annex A to these minutes.

Treasurers Report: (Profit & Loss Statement 1/10/19 through 30/9/2020)

Closing Balance of \$68,010.95 including Cheque account, Term Deposit 1 and 2 accounts and funds held in trust.

Resolution - that the Treasurer's report be adopted.

Moved (Helen van der Waal) Seconded (Roz Benson) **Carried**

Nominations for 2020/21 Office Bearers

President: **Wendy Trow** Nominated by Janine Milton Seconded by Peta Knapton **Carried**

Fred Mills Nominated by John Bailey Seconded by Helen Christensen **Carried**

There being two nominations, a vote was held.

Wendy Trow was declared to have won the most votes and was declared President.

Vice President: **Fred Mills** Nominated by Noelene King Seconded Helen Christensen **Carried**

Secretary: **Jodie Hornum** Nominated by Fred Mills Seconded Jackie Massey **Carried**

Treasurer: **Helen van der Waal** Nominated by Fred Mills Seconded Roz Benson **Carried**

Executive Committee:

1. **Anish Shah** Nominated by Roz Benson Seconded Helen Christensen **Carried**

2. **Janine Milton** Nominated by Roz Benson Seconded Jackie Massey **Carried**

3. **Sharon Smith** Nominated by Noelene King Seconded Steve Milton **Carried**

4. **Helen Christensen** Nominated by Jodie Hornum Seconded Deb Vanallen **Carried**

5. **Geoff McMullen** Nominated by Fred Mills Seconded Roz Benson **Carried**

Signatories: 1. Helen van der Waal 2. Geoff McMullen 3. Jodie Hornum

Seal Holders: 1. Wendy Trow (as President) 2. Jodie Hornum (as Secretary)

Meeting Closed: 8.15pm

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Balingup Art & Craft Affair (presented by Peta Knapton)

BACA's aim is to promote art and craft in the South West region and to encourage visitors to look into all of the businesses. We are all go for the Mother's Day weekend Saturday 8th May and Sunday 9th May in 2021. We will again invite artists and artisans to display their wares, the Fashion Parade will be a feature as will open studios. Also fun for kids with craft. Bhavni Hindocha will lead our team with the help of Wendy Mills, Alison McMullen, Irene Mader, Sue Holden and myself. Thanks to SFFD, Medieval Carnivale, the Shire and the wonderful Balingup Community for their support

Balingup Forest Community Garden (presented by Brona Slava)

The Balingup Community Forest Garden continues to flourish and is becoming more and more self reliant. As the soil in the garden is improving due to seven years of mulching, we are able to plant small areas of root crops to complement the now self seeding herbs such as parsley, coriander as well as rocket, broad beans, kale, endive and silverbeet. The maturing fruit trees as well as producing plentiful crops are providing shade and shelter for the annual plants. Our berry patch, popular with children is being expanded as new plants are introduced.

Regular fortnightly 'play and potter' days are mostly well attended and becoming popular with mum's with young children, who are happy to help with weeding, watering or other maintenance tasks as well as to have a chat while the children enjoy a nature play. We have about 40 members, not all actively involved but contributing with their special skill when needed or donating materials, such as cardboard, bird netting, or plants. We appreciate and are very grateful for your support.

The fundraiser held at the end of last year with music, food and garden stalls and children's activities was very successful and the money raised has been used to purchase a large quantity of native plants. These have been planted during a busy bee last July to revegetate the back of the garden and the area leading towards the railway bridge. The school children also came to help to pull out the invasive *Watsonia* and replant the area with native plants. A large old Mari has also be pruned with the money to make the area safe for children's play. The rest of the money will be used for a nature play area for children.

Thanks to a grant from SFFD extensive ground works were accomplished in form of resurfacing old and creating new gravel pathways, thus making the garden more accessible to public. An area was created behind the garden shed to relocate the rainwater tank, which is now sitting on a new solid wooden base and is in the process of being reconnected.

So far this year the soft plastic 'red recycle' recycling has saved 400kg of plastic from going to landfill. It is a well used service by the locals but more volunteers are needed to take the large bags to Coles in Bunbury or Manjimup. 15 kg of honey has been harvested from our bee hive that had to be relocated last year but now has been moved back and placed at the end of the garden to prevent any further bee attacks! The honey has been sold to members and with the money raised we hope in the future to buy our own bee keeping equipment. Another new garden induced initiative, 'DIY Home Brews' has been running on regular basis. In these workshops women and young girls are learning to make body care and medicinal products using as many herbs from the garden as possible, local olive oil and recycled containers.

The removal of the plastic tarps currently covering a large area of the garden together with the native revegetation area will further expand the garden. Members are at the stage of discussing how to share the responsibility for further development of the garden. We are aiming towards making more educational signs, increased advertising of events such as; plant propagation and pruning workshops, busy bees and fundraising events. We are also looking towards applying for a grant to finally build a rain/sun shelter at the front of the garden.

We are getting a great feedback from locals, visitors and Bibbulmun track walkers who enjoy the fresh produce that is freely available. We thank Balingup Progress Association for support and hope that the Balingup Community Forest Garden will continue to be an asset to our local community and help to contribute towards a sustainable future for Balingup.

Balingup Heritage Exhibition (presented by Noelene King)

This has been a very challenging year for the Committee. While we continue to receive many visitors who leave wonderfully encouraging comments, due to COVID we have had to close for a number of weeks. The Exhibition was also closed due to the relocation of the pace in Shed and the need to purchase a sea container (thank you SFFD) to store our many exhibition items. Both these closures have resulted in reduction in our income.

We currently have the compactus for sale at \$650 which is below current value as the buyer will need to dismantle before removal. No new exhibition items have been purchased this year. Displays during 2020 - Roads Board Hall and its many uses, New display planned for early November based on the many weddings held in Balingup between 1855 and 1955.

Balingup Medieval Carnivale (presented by Fred Mills)

Unfortunately not a lot of positives to report this year. As COVID affected the Carnivale as happened to a great number of events normally held in our Shire. As a result of the non event finances of the BMC were greatly affected.

On a positive note though our small team of regular volunteers continue to meet at the work space almost every Sunday preparing for the next Carnivale which we are all hoping will take place August 2021.

Due to the cancelling of the Carnivale we were forced into the situation of having to suspend paid employees. We are grateful to those employees of our group who continue to participate and give of their time freely, until we are fully operational again. I wish to express my appreciation to all Committee members, volunteers and supporters and look forward to a great event 2021

Balingup Men in Sheds - no report

Balingup Patches & Craft (presented by Judy Hawter)

The Patches and Craft group have now been established for over 30 years and during this period the attendance, interests and goals have fluctuated and changed as the Balingup community has changed its needs. This year the Covid19 virus has played a part in how the group continued.

Our Membership for 2020 is 27 financial members and 3 non financial friends of BP&C Group. The members still pay an annual fee of \$50.00 and \$3.00 each week for morning tea, when attending. This covers the cost of rent to the Balingup Sports & Recreation Committee and other minor expenses.

2020 has been a different year because of the Covid19 virus which has seen us closed down for some months and then only limited members allowed during our weekly meetings. Over the months, however, we have met with an increase in members being present and have made some progress in the Wall Hangings for the Lesser Hall.

The mid year outing was held on 2nd July to Busselton, a most enjoyable day and car pooling was the way to go. We had a workshop to help with the specialized sewing for the Wall hanging, this has been the only activity for the year apart from the very small group who went on a retreat to Albany recently. No festivals will be available for the group to attend this year.

Balingup Rail Group (provided by Malcolm Lee)

BRG is a committee established by the Balingup Progress Association (Inc.) ("BPA") in 2018 as a result of community concern at the detrimental effect on road safety on South West Highway and on the amenity of towns on the Highway that will follow from expansion of the Greenbushes lithium mine if transportation of lithium ore from the mine to processing or export facilities is by high-frequency heavy haulage traffic on the highway.

BRG was established to examine and report on two issues. First, use of the South West rail line south of Bunbury to replace the road transport of lithium ore and, second, the prospect of establishing a tourist rail service between Bunbury and Bridgetown if use of the line became available.

Members of the Committee are persons of considerable expertise with wide experience at managerial level in the fields of transport (road and rail), business, engineering, tourism, and finance. Included are the Operations Manager of Talison Lithium and a Councillor of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire.

With reference to the first objective of the Committee's charter, namely, to secure road safety and preserve town amenity, BRG has supported, and through the BPA kept the community informed, of the work of the South West Development Commission in establishing participation by Talison Lithium and Arc Infrastructure (lessee of the rail line) in a pre-feasibility study of the possibility of shifting the lithium ore transport from road to rail. As a result of that work there has been engagement in consultation with Government on the issue of re-opening the line and the recent announcement by Government of the provision of funds for a feasibility study into further development of the Bunbury Port complex and Kwinana Bulk Terminal to support the export and processing of lithium ore with the aim of assessing the viability of a rail based supply chain assisted by those improvements.

In respect of the second objective of its charter, examination of a tourist rail service between Bunbury and Bridgetown, commencement of a feasibility study on that proposal may prove to be an integral element in securing the first objective.

Tourism is a vital element of the economy and, as is already evident, it is of enhanced importance to the State since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

BRG considers that Government support for re-opening the line and it seeking financial aid for that purpose from Infrastructure Australia could be encouraged, and assisted, if the case for transfer of lithium ore haulage from road to rail were complemented by a cogent argument for development of a tourist rail service on the line. It is arguably the most scenic section of rail line in the State with each town that is served by it connected to a significant tourist attraction.

Assessment of the benefit received by Government on expenditure of re-opening the line would not be confined to the reduced cost of maintenance of South West Highway, improvement of road safety, and amenity of towns on the Highway, but would extend to development of tourism in the South West region with associated economic dividends.

Tourist rail experiences are common throughout the world, incorporated in tour packages offered to tourists by tourism operators. Undoubtedly operation of a Bunbury-Bridgetown tourist rail service would be a very attractive addition to South West region tourism options.

In that regard it may be noted that BRG has been contacted by Busselton Chamber of Commerce requesting a briefing on the progress of the Committee's work on this element.

In determining that a feasibility study should be commenced in respect of this proposal BRG obtained the business case prepared for the Wheatbelt Heritage Rail proposal sponsored by the Shire of Dowerin with funds provided by Government. BRG also contacted and conferred with Linqage International, the company that produced the feasibility study for the project.

BRG has obtained detailed information on the operation of two tourist rail services that may be considered to be comparable in length and scenic value to the proposed Bunbury-Bridgetown rail service, namely, West Coast Wilderness Railway in north-west Tasmania (Queenstown-Strahan), and Dunedin Railways at the southern end of New Zealand's South Island. (Dunedin-Middlemarch, via Taieri Gorge).

Furthermore, BRG has conferred with an experienced rail consultant (former manager of Regional Passenger Rail Services for Westrail and recently Manager of the Toronto Metrolink passenger rail service reorganisation.) who was part of a consortium that prepared a business case for a tourist rail service from Perth to Bridgetown, shortly before the line south of Bunbury was closed.

It is to be noted that further weight has now been given to the Bunbury-Bridgetown tourist rail proposal by the Government announcement that a new train is under construction for the "Australind" service with the intention that it meet the requirements of tourism as well as providing a service for commuter passengers. Such a re-positioned "Australind" service will provide a natural connection for the Perth tourist market to a scenic South West rail experience between Bunbury and Bridgetown. And, of course, the business case for such a service would be further assisted if it were able to conduct the operation with the replaced "Australind" rolling stock.

The present task for BRG is to present the argument for the project to interested parties, and to Government, and to obtain community support for its promotion.

Balingup Small Farm Field Day (presented by Janine Milton)

The BSFFD committee met from October 2019 to plan for the annual BSFFD event to be held on 18 April 2020. Due to COVID 19 and the subsequent recommendations made by WA Health Department, the difficult decision was made on 13 March 2020 to cancel this event. This was communicated to all exhibitors, the public and local community. This decision was well received by all regular exhibitors and patrons. We are currently applying for another Government Grant- "Supporting Agricultural Shows and Field Days" due this Friday to reimburse the BSFFD Committee for \$7648.77 expenses incurred.

A Lottery West Impact of COVID19 Grant lodged by the BSFFD committee was successful in securing \$15,000 for the BPA and this has enabled limited community grants in 2020. At this time, no other payments to BPA or BADSA have been requested.

The attached financial profit and loss sheet shows that in 2019-20 we had a negative balance of \$43,340.14 due to field day losses (-\$7,896.67) and 2019 payments to BPA and BADSA (\$13,403.55) and BSFFD Grants (\$22,039.92). However, our balance sheet shows retained financial assets of \$63,350.52 at 30 June 2020. These figures need to be read with the Trust Fund accounts as the two accounts are currently linked.

As COVID19 is still a reality and expected to continue into 2021, the BSFFD committee have decided to plan for a smaller and more distributed mosaic event rather than our usual field day. We are thinking of this as a Balingup Small Farm Showcase for people to experience rural community, knowledge and produce rather than a field day. It will be similar enough to maintain the brand, but different enough to be able to try new things. It is hoped that this event will re-energise the town and community and demonstrate our collective resilience. The committee are planning to hold this event on the advertised day- Saturday 10 April 2021 and include activities on Friday 9 April and Sunday 11 April. We plan to return to the usual field day concept and design in 2022.

The 2020 event will focus on our usual themes of showing people the benefits of living on the land and in small rural communities, sustainable farming and innovative techniques on small farms. The focus will be on farm visits, talks, demonstrations and we hope to make use of the Village Green as a focal point. Some aspects of the event will be ticketed (farm visits and long table dinner with speaker) and others will be free (village green markets and some demos and talks on Saturday). It is expected that this event will be cost neutral, so it is unlikely that there will be profits to contribute to community grants.

We are seeking interested people to give us ideas, join the committee and also assist us over the weekend. After 30 years of a fully volunteer base, the BSFFD committee have contracted a paid coordinator. This will provide us with dual benefits of developing a sustainable model into the future and supporting local community employment. We warmly welcome Jodie Hornum as our new coordinator for 2021.

Balingup Small Farm Field Day Trust Fund (presented by Janine Milton)

2020 Trust Fund Grants: Due to COVID 19 and the cancellation of the BSFFD, there were no Trust Fund Committee meetings or allocations in 2020.

The 2019 committee: BSFFD Reps- Janine Milton (chair), Russell Price, Stuart Walls, BPA Reps- John Ranieri/ Fred Mills, Jodie Hornum, Community Reps- Peter Strachan, Kevin Haigh

2019 Trust Fund Grants: The committee initially met on 7 August but only received 2 applications. One was successful and the other was not. The committee then met again on 19 November, with Fred Mills as a new BPA President/ representative. There were 12 applications: 6 granted in full, 1 granted partial payment, 1 rejected and 3 pending on further information (1 of which was then granted).

Total Grants 2019	\$33,931
Funds drawn to Oct 20	\$21,696.61

Trust Fund Procedures: These procedures were developed in 2015 and have been updated each year through recommendation by the elected Trust Fund Committee then endorsed by BPA. As no meetings were held in 2020, these procedures are as per 2019 version.

Balingup Townscape Committee (presented by Helen Christensen)

Committee members have continued their program of on ground works completing the following;

Tree planting along Blackwood River Drive opposite the school.

New planter box inserts.

Repairs to the brick work of one planter box.

Rubbish bin art work.

Historic plaques around the town in conjunction with BHG (funding from SFFD)

Continued work on the Brook Walk.

Picnic table installed near the weir.

River stones laid along the water course on the northern entry to town.

Weeding/spraying around native plants along the Brook/Alan Rothery Walk.

A 50 klm speed sign has been erected on the entry to town beyond the Cheese Factory.
The Shire paid for the cutting of the footpath around the Crepe Myrtles
Watering and housing of the deodars before planting.
During the summer months the watering of the elms along the railway line was carried out weekly. It is hoped that this year that TS can use the town Fire truck instead of using private vehicle and tank. Use of a bigger unit will save time.

Projects still underway;

Continued work on the area around the weir. Placement of a foot bridge on the weir. All the work carried out over the last two years by committee members and friends meant that the weir work perfectly with no flooding on to the AR walk. Entry statement on the northern entry to town. This is a big project involving many hours of volunteer time especially falling on Fred's shoulders.

The production of wicker hanging baskets is continuing work being carried out by John.

It is hoped to have murals on the skate part boards completed this year.

We submitted a budget item to Council for work costing \$15,000. We only received \$5,000.

We had hoped to start the southern entry statement. Replace the banners on the poles on the northern entry to town. Establish a canoe launch site near the Birdwood Park bridge. Put poles with hanging baskets on the VG. Raise the pedestrian bridge along the Brook. Plus solar lighting on significant tree. The committee will spend their budget allocation very carefully.

I would once again like to thank all the members of a very hard working dedicated group especially the blokes Fred, John, Geoff, Denis, Pete their expertise and know how has been invaluable to this Community. Thanks to Noelene our Secretary, Geoff as our Treasure, Ros & Wendy for their skills, ideas and support. Thank you to Joe for his continuing support.

Birdwood Park Avenue of Honour (presented by Wayne Irvine)

General maintenance continued throughout the year on the gardens, around the Memorial Plaques, Interpretive Panels, and picnic tables. Other activities of the Birdwood Park Group included the planting 18 native seedlings in the Avenue of Honour gardens to replace plants that have died. The plants were donated by the Donnybrook Balingup Shire. Most of the garden plants are now well established and are presently flowering.

The Donnybrook Balingup Shire continued with an agreed programme of pruning some of the Avenue of Honour oak trees that show signs of decline. This year the pruning was only of a minor nature. An annual meeting is held with the Shire to review the ongoing health of the oak trees.

No funds were raised this year as the Small Farm Field Day was cancelled. \$407 was spent on the purchase of 1000 Avenue of Honour information brochures. The brochures were delivered to Balingup Visitors Centre for distribution. \$70.06 was used to purchase herbicide and decorative stones. \$756.04 remains in the Birdwood Park account held by BPA. The Birdwood Park Group consists of 9 members.

The Donnybrook Balingup Shire has confirmed that the Memorial Plaques in the Avenue of Honour, the flagpole, and Interpretive Panels in Birdwood Park are covered by Shire insurance. There are no assets in Birdwood Park that require BPA insurance. There are plans for an additional Interpretive panel to be designed, manufactured, and installed in Birdwood Park this year.

Mullalyup Improvement Group (presented by Peter Gubler)

All events this last year have been cancelled due low member numbers or COVID restrictions. The group holds \$1700 and has no assets.

Telling Tales in Balingup (presented by Deb Vanallen)

Sadly . . . the 2020 Telling Tales in Balingup event which was scheduled to run over the weekend – Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th July, 2020 was cancelled due to COVID and social distancing restrictions! The decision was made in late April, 2020. Although planning had begun for the event, luckily we'd had minimal expenses to that point. Unfortunately, due to the events cancellation, we had to return/decline several small grants which we'd been successful in securing.

As many of you know, we've had a changing of the guard in the organising committee with a few of the long term event organisers withdrawing after the events 10 year in 2019 due to health issues and/or family/work commitments. We have made the decision to change the date/weekend . . . proposing the fourth weekend in May. Although the middle weekend of any school holiday period is ideal for families, it tends to be busy regardless. Our aim is to generate new visitors to town, over a weekend which would be 'fringe season' for many businesses in the region. It is proposed that the 2021 event be held on 22nd and 23rd May. Grant funding is being sourced from a number of bodies. The new committee is raring to go for 2021 . . . although if there is anyone else keen to join us you'd be very welcome!

Path, Tracks & Trails (presented by Steve Milton)

Report produced by in 2016, this is the basis of all activities conducted by the committee chaired by Geoff McMullen.

1. Report focuses on:

- a. Safety – aged mobility, children accessing school, tourists and events, general community access between satellite suburbs(?)
- b. Recreation – tree change demographics, arboretum town, connectedness – trails and tracks – towns, recreation precinct, cross terrain cycles
- c. Tourism – business, major events access

2. Current situation:

Ground brief - Bibbulmun Track, Golden Valley Tree Park, Alan Rothery Walk, The Balingup Heritage Trail, town divided in 4 parts by SW H'way, Nannup-Balingup Rd and Jayes Rd, railway line, Balingup Brook.

3. Current plans:

- a. Develop the Balingup Brook walk with signage.
- b. Enhance track to Amber Valley where necessary.
- c. Design and seek preparatory approvals for the extension trail to the Racecourse Reserve on the southern side of the SW H'way and the return on the NE side of the SW H'way.

Proposals – BPA sees this report as an important precursor to a closer liaison with the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire.

- a. The events developed by the BPA have become capable of supporting community based projects. The opportunity to conduct jointly funded projects can often be better facilitated if a community contributes. Perhaps the Alan Rothery Walk would be just such. It carries a very large number of pedestrians, not just for the BSFD, and warrants upgrading to the highest standard for both pedestrian, cyclists and mobility aids.
- b. The town footpaths are in serious disrepair with access on and off roads often being a serious hazard to all forms of pedestrian traffic. This was going to be assessed for prioritising works programs by the Shire. We see this as a most urgent need. The Shire has done minor repairs to the main pedestrian paths in the shopping area and conducted some works at the Post Office in 2018.
- c. The BPA investigate and develop plans to form walk tracks and trails for recreation that takes in the natural environment. These trails and tracks would be planned to be added on to include the next trail. Currently Balingup is a town with isolated trails and tracks focussed on the town and with some connections to the Bibbulmun track. Perhaps it is time to look into the Blackwood Recreation Precinct development and associated tracks to connect this with the town. It is not too far from the imagination for these tracks to be connected to Nannup.

Conclusion – Town footpaths safety is really not being managed for our aged and for our younger generations. This is an increasingly high priority for our Shire to take a more active role. The committee will continue to build partnerships that will enhance the recreational and tourism aspects of our community trails and tracks.